

The Skeleton of the Yayoi People

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The Skeleton of the Yayoi People

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The Yayoi age is a period of about 600 years in Japan's prehistory from about 300 B.C. to 300 A.D. The Jomon age preceding the Yayoi age was a long lasting period for 7,000 to 8,000 years. The Jomon subsistence was characterized by fishing and hunting, while that of the Yayoi by agriculture following to the introduction of paddy-rice cultivation technique.

The skeletons of the Jomon people which are unique in morphology are basically unchanged throughout the period and areas. On the other hand, those of the Yayoi people are divided into two types. One is similar to the Jomon people in skeletal morphology and excavated from sites distributing along the coast of northwestern Kyushu. The other type is markedly different from the Jomon people and unearthed from sites in northern Kyushu and Yamaguchi Prefecture.

The facial morphology of the Jomon and northwestern Kyushu Yayoi people is characterized by relatively low and wide contour, nearly squared orbital openings, remarkably depressed nasal root, and prominent glabella and superciliary arches. In contrast, the northern Kyushu Yayoi people show higher and narrower facial contour, higher orbital openings, much shallower nasal root, and remarkably flat glabella and superciliary arches.

The stature of the Jomon people estimated by Pearson's method is almost the same as in the northwestern Kyushu Yayoi people, being about 158cm. for males and 148cm. for females; while that of the northern Kyushu Yayoi people is estimated to be about 162cm. for males and 151cm. for females.

In short, both northwestern Kyushu Yayoi and Jomon people are characterized by a lower facial contour and a shorter stature in comparison to the northern Kyushu Yayoi people.

The sites in northwestern Kyushu which yielded Yayoi skeletal remains are located costal areas and islands. The Jomon sites and graves are usually small in scale. On the other hand, the northern Kyushu Yayoi sites are distributed in plain areas where most of the skeletal remains are found in large burial jars. Archaeological evidence suggests that the former were fishermen and the latter farmers.

On the basis of several evidence described above, the following supposition may be reasonably accepted:

(1) The Yayoi people in the costal areas of northwestern Kyushu were the descendants of the Jomon people (indigenous type); and

(2) The Yayoi people in the plain areas of northern Kyushu were those who received the genetic influence of migrants from Korea and Mainland China during the period from the end of the Jomon age to the beginning of the Yayoi age (migrant type).

弥生時代人骨

内藤芳篤

北九州の弥生人は西北九州と北部九州のグループに分けられる。身長や頭骨の形態に関して前者は縄文人の特徴を示し、後者はこれと対照的である。

人類学的ならびに考古学的証拠から、次のように考えられる。

(1) 西北九州の沿岸部に居住した弥生人は縄文人の子孫である（在来型）。

(2) 北部九州の平野部に居住した弥生人は、縄文時代末期から弥生時代初期にかけて朝鮮半島および中国大陆から渡来した集団の遺伝的影響を受けた（渡来型）。

(Summarized and translated by K. Hanihara)